(c) whether it is being proposed to scrap the Commission?

THE MINISTER OF WELFARE (SHRI SITARAM KESRI) : (a) and (b) The matter is being enquired.

(c) No, Sir.

National Maternity Benefit Scheme in Maharashtra

914. MISS. SAROJ KHAPARDE : Will the Minister of RURAL AREAS AND EMPLOYMENT be pleased to state :

(a) how many women have so far been benefited from the National Maternity Benefit Scheme (NMBS) in Maharashtra after the implementation of the scheme; district-wise; and

(b) what action Government have taken or propose to take to extend NMBS in the entire rural Maharashtra within a time-frame?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RURAL AREAS AND EMPLOYMENT (DEPARTMENT OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT) (SHRI UTTAMBHAI H. PATEL) : (a) and (b) The information is being collected and will be laid on the table of the House.

Sugarcane Price

915. SHRI SHIVAJIRAO GIRIDHAR PATIL: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state the State-wise sugarcane price advised by various State Governments during 1995-96 season?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI MOHD. AYUB KHAN) : As per the latest information available, the State Government of Bihar has announced Rs. 71 per quintal as State Advised Sugarcane Price for 1995-96 Season. Similarly, the range of State Advised Sugarcane Price announced by the State Government of Uttar Pradesh is Rs. 70 to Rs. 74 per quintal.

Proposal to Transfer Mahabodhi Temple to Neo-Buddhists

916. SHRI K.R. MALKANI : Will the Minister of WELFARE be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is fact that the National Minorities Commission has recommended the transfer of Mahabodhi temple, Bodhgaya to Neo-Buddhists, countrary to the tradition of ages (vide Pioneer, 12.2.96);

(b) whether Buddhists, old or new, are not, in law and in fact part of Hindu society; and

(c) whether a subject like this falls within the jurisdiction of NMC?

THE MINISTER OF WELFARE (SHRI SITARAM KESRI) : (a) to (c) Buddhists have been notified as a minority community for the purpose of National Commission for Minorities Act, 1992. Under Section 9(1) (c) of this Act the National Commission for Minorities has made recommendation to the Central Government for enactment of a suitable and appropriate legislation to vest the management of the Bodhgaya temple exclusively in the Buddhists community.

Cost escalation of Assam Gas Cracker Project

917. SHRI SHIV CHARAN SINGH : Will the Minister of CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that the cost of Assam Gas Cracker Project has since escalated;

(b) if so, what are the details thereof;

(c) whether Government have since made necessary provision therefor;

(d) what is the date upto which such delaying issues are to be sorted out to enable the project activities to start; and

(e) what steps Government like to take in the event of the said project becoming unviable because of delays and cost escalation etc.?

THE MINISTER FOR CHEMICALS AND FERTILIZERS (SHRI RAM LAKHAN SINGH YADAV): (a) and (b) The cost of the Assam Gas cracker project is now estimated to be around Rs. 3400 crores.

(c) Appropriate funding scheme for implementing the project is required to be made by the project authorities.

(d) and (e) The project of 2 lakh TPA ethylene capacity with a central capital subsidy of Rs. 377 crores and provision of gas at concessional price of Rs. 600 per thousand standard cubic meters for a priod of fifteen years